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Zimbabwe | Smallholder Technology
& Access to Markets Program (STAMP)

SNAPSHOT

Female Paprika Farmers Prove Excellent Leaders

With support from USAID-STAMP, female farmers are improving the productivity and quality of high-value paprika crops.



Photo by Fintrac Inc.

Rose Kunamira won first prize at a recent paprika field day. She is one of the most productive farmers in her area, producing the equivalent of 1,600 kilograms per hectare.

“I am impressed with the results to date...We would not have achieved these results without the STAMP team.”

Dumisani Masuku

Field officer, Hyveld

Telling Our Story

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As part of its goal to increase incomes and food security for smallholder farmers, the USAID Smallholder Technology and Access to Markets Program (STAMP) is helping growers diversify into high-value crops such as paprika.

The farmers have been linked with a buyer, Hyveld, and are receiving inputs. By having access to a reliable and fair market, the farmers are in a position to earn substantial incomes, moving many of them away from subsistence farming. USAID-STAMP agronomists also provide technical support, introducing good agricultural practices, such as mulching and crop rotation, and teach farmers to view farming as a business rather than an occupation.

The Kuguta Kushanda producer group in Chiendambuya is led by a female farmer, Marrian Chirara, who oversees the 55 farmers in her group. “I initially found it difficult to work with the farmers, but I eventually managed to do so with the support of my husband, other female members of the group, and the Hyveld and USAID-STAMP agronomists,” she said.

Gender mainstreaming is a key objective under USAID-STAMP, and female leaders in traditionally male-dominated regions go a long way in motivating other female farmers to participate in program activities.

Chirara has proven to be a strong leader, encouraging farmers in her group to attend trainings and fulfill their obligations. As of June 2012, 40 of the 55 farmers in her group had repaid their input credits in full, and with several months still left in the growing season, the remaining 15 farmers are also likely to repay their loans. Because their training included financial planning and basic business skills, the farmers fully understand their responsibilities in a contract farming agreement.

Rose Kunamira, a member of another paprika producer group, is a single mother struggling to support her family. By applying fertilizers the way program agronomists taught her, she yielded 400 kilograms of grade A paprika from 0.25 hectares, which is nearly double what other paprika farmers’ average yield.

Kunamira is proving to be one of the most productive farmers in her area. She recently won a weed wiper – a simple tool that helps apply herbicide efficiently and evenly – for placing first at a paprika field day.

She was very proud of her win, especially after narrowly losing to her uncle at the last field day. “I am going to work hard next year to achieve even higher yields,” she said.

Dumisani Masuku, a Hyveld field officer, is impressed with the production coming from Chiendambuya. “The quality of produce packed is much higher this year – there is better distinction between the grades and few contaminants,” he said. “We would not have achieved these results without the USAID-STAMP team.”